

Read the [bill text](#) or Congressman Blumenauer's [Myths vs Facts](#) page.

I want to correct some grave mischaracterizations of the health care reform legislation, *America's Affordable Health Choices Act* (H.R. 3200). Anti-health reform groups are misconstruing a provision of the legislation, which enjoys broad support in Congress, to provide coverage under Medicare for people to talk to their doctor about their wishes and care preferences at the end of life.

Such groups claim that advance care planning consultations include “euthanasia” and are “mandatory every five years.” These claims are blatantly false. Accusations that physicians would be required to “recommend a method for death” are as offensive as they are untrue.

I have been working on a bipartisan basis to ensure that patient wishes are known and respected. The provision included in H.R. 3200 simply allows Medicare to pay for a conversation between patients and their doctors if the patient wishes to speak about his or her preferences and values.

This benefit would be purely voluntary

, and patients do not need to have this consultation with their doctor if they do not wish to do so. The new Medicare benefit would allow doctors to be compensated for these conversations every five years, and more frequently if a patient has a life-limiting illness or health status changes.

Without these discussions, families often are not confronted with these difficult decisions until emergency situations arise, leaving spouses, sons, daughters and grandchildren unprepared because they do not know their loved ones' preferences. As a result, families are left struggling to make decisions in the midst of turmoil. These are deeply personal decisions and they do not need to happen in crisis.

Doctors, nurses, and patient advocacy groups have supported our bipartisan effort to improve the quality of care for individuals facing their last chapter of life. I hope you will recognize the urgent need for improved communication around advance care planning, recognize the false claims against this provision, and support our efforts.

Sincerely,

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Section 1233 is endorsed by: **AARP, American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, American College of Physicians, American Hospice Foundation, Center to Advance Palliative Care, Consumers Union, Gundersen Lutheran Health System, Hospice and Palliative Nursing Association, Medicare Rights Center, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, National Palliative Care Research Center, Providence Health and Services, and Supportive Care Coalition**